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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program to increase intermediate students' interest in writing through the integration of technology. The targeted population consisted of fifth grade students at a medium sized elementary school in the suburb of a large midwestern city. The problem was the low level of student interest in classroom writing activities. The problem became evident through behaviors displayed by students as well as a lack of motivation exhibited by students while working on writing activities. Analysis of data collected for this research revealed that students displayed a lack of interest in writing as well as a lack of confidence in their writing abilities. The students did not show an interest in writing activities that were typically assigned to them. Some possible causes that were explored were the mundane writing activities assigned to students, the complexity of the writing process, increased pressure on teachers to raise writing scores, and the overall lack of student motivation. A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable researchers resulted in the selection of three main interventions: creation of a computerized classroom newsletter, development of children's stories using HyperStudio, use of technology for various writing activities. The named solution strategies were used throughout the intervention within the targeted fifth grade. The researcher used a pre- and post-intervention survey, teacher observation records, and student interviews to record information during the intervention. Post intervention data indicated an increase in student interest in writing using technology as well as an increase in confidence as a writer, desire to share written work, and desire to improve quality of writing. Students in the targeted group also improved their technology skills and their willingness to have their work edited by a peer. The researcher found the intervention to be a success for the targeted group of students. Appendixes contain student, parent, and teacher questionnaires; fifth-grade student pre- and post-intervention questionnaires; a checklist for observing student behaviors during writing activities; and student interview questions. (Contains 32 references, 3 tables, and 3 figures.) (Author/RS)

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IMPROVING STUDENT INTEREST IN WRITING
THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY

Coreen France

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

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This report describes a program to increase intermediate students' interest in writing through the integration of technology. The targeted population consisted of fifth grade students at a medium sized elementary school in the suburb of a large midwestern city. The problem was the low level of student interest in classroom writing activities. The problem became evident through behaviors displayed by students as well as a lack of motivation exhibited by students while working on writing activities.

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A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable researchers resulted in the selection of three main interventions: creation of a computerized classroom newsletter, development of children's stories using HyperStudio, use of technology for various writing activities. The named solution strategies were used throughout the intervention within the targeted fifth grade. The researcher used a pre and post intervention survey, teacher observation records, and student interviews to record information during the intervention.

Post intervention data indicated an increase in student interest in writing using technology as well as an increase in confidence as a writer, desire to share written work, and desire to improve quality of writing. Students in the targeted group also improved their technology skills and their willingness to have their work edited by a peer. The researcher found the intervention to be a success for the targeted group of students.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

Many students are not motivated or interested in school in general; many students lack motivation and interest only in certain subject areas. The fifth grade students in the targeted group show little motivation or interest in the area of writing. Students demonstrate their lack of motivation and interest for writing through their comments during class time designated to writing, off-task behavior during this time, and decreased student involvement in writing activities. Evidence of the lack of student interest in writing can be found through teacher observations, student interviews, and responses on student questionnaires and surveys.

Immediate Problem Context

The elementary school site is located in a northwestern suburb of a large midwestern city. The school serves only 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students with an enrollment of 338. The ethnic background of the students in the school is similar to the entire district. Within the school and district the ethnic backgrounds are as follows: 79.6% Caucasian, 2.1% African-American, 9.8% Hispanic, and 8.6% Asian/Pacific Islander. Within the school, the attendance rate is 96.2%. The school also has a low-income rate of 6.8% with 5.3% of students having limited English proficiency.

Within the targeted school and district, the pupil to teacher ratio is at 15.8 to 1 with a pupil to administrator ratio of 180.3 to 1. Within the school, there are 31 certified teachers on staff. Female teachers make up 86% of the staff, while male teachers make up 14%. Of the teachers within the site, Caucasians make up 99.1% of the staff. The teachers at the school have an average teaching experience of 14 years. A total of 34.1% of the teachers have bachelor's degrees and 65.9% of the teachers have a master's degree or beyond. The average teacher salary in the school is \$49,464. There is one full-time social worker within the school as well as three Title 1 teachers, 2 LD/BD resource teachers, one speech teacher, 2 self-contained special education teachers, and one TPI instructor.

The targeted class of fifth graders includes 20 students total. There are eleven boys and 9 girls in the class. Several students in the class speak 2nd languages and a few receive services through the Transitional Program of Instruction for students with English as a second language. None of the students in the class are considered special education students.

The physical facility of the site is a one-story building that attaches to the neighboring primary school as well as the district office. The school was built in 1966 to accommodate the rapidly growing population of the district. The building was originally designed as a K-8 school but has been divided into separate primary and intermediate schools. A section of the building has also been sectioned off and converted into the district offices. The intermediate level school was remodeled in 1988.

Each classroom has at least one networked computer, telephone, and access to TV's, VCR's, overhead projectors, and computer projectors. The school has one computer lab that is available to all classroom teachers.

The district operates on a total budget of \$14,680,954. The instructional expenditure per pupil in the 1999-2000 school year was \$4706. The 1999-2000 school year operating expenditure per pupil was \$7992 (Illinois School Report Card, 2001)

The Surrounding Community

The district serves most of the city in which it is located as well as parts of three other surrounding communities. There are four total schools in the district including one K-5 elementary school, one K-2 primary school, one 6-8 middle school, and the targeted 3-5 intermediate school. The total enrollment for the district is 1,623. The district residential population is approximately 15,239. The ethnic make-up of the surrounding community corresponds to the actual school district. The community is made up of 92.4% Caucasian, 0.3% African-American, 4.9% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.7% Hispanic, and 1.7% of other ethnic origins. The district as a whole has 7.7% limited English proficiency with many of the students emigrating from Eastern European countries (State School Report Card, 2001). While most students within the district boundaries attend public school, some students choose to attend the private elementary school within the targeted city. The community would most often be described as middle class with 36.74% of the population with college degrees or beyond. The median household income for the area is \$55,238 with 65.27% being white-collar workers (Yahoo Real Estate, 2002).

The targeted city began to develop in the early 1900's to provide affordable homes in a safe rural area for families. As more homes continued to be built in the area, an area Improvement Association was developed to serve as the governing agency for the community. In 1976, the area finally became incorporated as a city. Since then, development of single-family homes and other living communities has continued to expand the community.

One problem the local city and targeted school district faces is the lack of tax revenue from industry. The area continues to grow with developing homes, however, industry has not moved in.

National Context of the Problem

Student writing motivation and interest, or lack thereof, is not only an issue at the local research site. Throughout the targeted district, county, and state, student motivation in all academic areas has been an intense issue. “The problem is not a lack of intellectual ability but, rather, a lack of motivation” (Rea, 2000, p. 187). One of the most popular research topics in education today is discovering ways to improve student academic motivation. When it comes to writing and literacy in particular, student motivation and interest seem to play a key factor. According to Diane Bottomley, “because children’s attitudes, values, beliefs, and motivation play a significant role in their literacy learning, the affective domain continues to be an area of interest for educators and researchers” (1997, p. 286).

Many recent studies have suggested reasons and given evidence for a lack of motivation and even a decreasing interest in academics and various subjects in particular. According to Anderman and Maehr (1994), academic motivation not only declines over time, as the student gets older, but also interests and attitudes in school in general rapidly flounder as students advance in grades. Why this occurs and how to reverse this deterioration in motivation are the focus of numerous studies as well as countless hours of thought and experimental efforts by individual teachers across the nation. “The current challenge to intrinsic motivation researchers, then, is to find additional ways in which teachers can work actively to promote students’ intrinsic motivation to learn” (Patrick, Hisley, & Kempler, 2000, p. 217).

The quest to increase student interest and motivation in writing continues to take priority in the classroom. According to one elementary school teacher, Jamie Worthington, “the better people are at writing the more likely it is that they’ll get what they want out of life. Writing isn’t the end; it’s the means to an end. It’s a tool” (2002, p.1). Writing instruction and ability has also become a priority to administrators due to the ever-increasing importance placed on standardized test results.

As writing instruction continues to increase as a priority in the classroom, students seem to be becoming more and more apprehensive about and disinterested in writing. “As teachers of composition, at some point in our careers we have undoubtedly experienced writing apprehension. We can relate, therefore, to our students’ malaise. We can understand why some develop an aversion to writing and would do almost anything to avoid it” (Reeves, 1997, p. 38). Writing instruction has become not only a priority, but also a struggle in the classroom.

To conclude, it is quite evident that new strategies to improve interest in writing need to be implemented. Writing is an important skill that students will use throughout their lives. As the importance of written communication continues to increase in our society, it is imperative that teachers not discourage young writers or cause them to lose interest in writing altogether.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

With the intent of documenting the lack of student interest in writing, the researcher employed two different questionnaires and a survey of fifth grade teachers. Questionnaires included a student questionnaire and a parent questionnaire. The teacher survey was used to analyze the extent of the problem within the targeted grade level at the specific research site.

The researcher designed the student questionnaire (Appendix A) to determine fifth grade students' attitudes towards writing and writing activities in and out of the classroom. The questionnaire was administered to a random sample of 40 students within the fifth grade level at the targeted research site in order to determine whether the problem was found throughout the grade level. The student questionnaire was administered during the first week of the 2002-2003 school year. A summary of the student responses from the questionnaire is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Responses to Student Questionnaire to Determine Interest in Writing

Student Questions	<u>Student Responses</u>		<u>Percentages</u>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Do you like to write?	16	24	40	60
Do you like writing in school?	13	27	33	67
Do you like doing assigned writing activities?	15	25	38	62
Is writing your favorite subject?	5	35	13	87
Is writing your least favorite subject?	28	12	70	30
Are you a good writer?	19	21	48	52
Do you like to share your writing?	16	24	40	60
Do you always understand writing assignments?	22	18	55	45
Do you think writing is challenging?	31	9	78	22
Are you motivated to be a good writer?	7	33	18	82
Do you struggle to come up with ideas to write about?	20	20	50	50
Do you do any writing outside of school?	11	29	28	72
Do you want to be a professional writer?	6	34	15	85
Would you like to do more writing in school?	12	28	30	70

As shown in Table 1, 60% of students from the sample of fifth grade students state that they do not like to write, and 67% of those students claim that they do not like writing in school. In addition, only 18% of the 40 students questioned are actually motivated to be good writers, while 82% of students are not motivated to be good writers. The results of the questionnaire in terms of percentage are noteworthy since they show that a considerably higher percent of students dislike writing along with activities associated with writing.

The high percentages of students who dislike writing in and out of school as well as the high percent of non-motivated students illustrate a significant problem. The numbers confirm that not only do students dislike writing in general; they also lack the motivation to become a better writer. Most students view writing as a challenge, have a hard time coming up with their own ideas, and prefer not to share their writing with others.

The second questionnaire designed by the researcher (Appendix B) was intended to retrieve information from the parents. The 21 sets of parents of the targeted fifth grade class completed the parent questionnaire. The parent questionnaire was sent home to parents through the mail. The parents then sent the questionnaire back to school with their child. Table 2 shows the data collected from the parent questionnaire.

Table 2

Responses to Parent Questionnaire to Assist in Determining Student Interest in Writing

Parent Questions	<u>Parent Responses</u>		<u>Percentages</u>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Do you like to write?	4	17	19	81
Did you like to write in school?	4	17	19	81
Does your child like to write?	7	14	33	67
Do you help your child with writing assignments?	20	1	95	5
Do you like to read your child's writing?	21	0	100	0
Are you a good writer?	3	18	14	86
Is your child a good writer?	13	8	86	14
Would you like your child to become a better writer?	21	0	100	0
Does your child struggle with writing?	17	4	81	19
Is your child motivated to be a good writer?	7	14	19	81
Does your child struggle to come up with writing ideas?	9	12	43	57
Does your child do any writing on his/her own?	2	19	10	90
Do you think it is important for your child to be a good writer?	18	3	86	14
Would you like more emphasis on writing at your child's school?	6	15	29	71

As shown in Table 2, the results of the parent questionnaire, only 33% of the parents questioned felt that their children like to write. In addition, only 19% of parents felt that their child was motivated to write. Surprisingly, 100% of parents would like their child to become a better writer, but only 6% of parents would like more emphasis put on writing in school.

Looking at the results of the two questionnaires, it is evident that both student's and parents agree that student's have little motivation to write, as described in Chapter One. Not

only do the majority of students and parents dislike writing, they also admit that writing is a struggle for most of the students.

Further confirmation for the lack of student interest and motivation towards writing can be found in the results of the teacher survey (Appendix C) presented in Table 3. The teacher survey was given to four of the fifth grade teachers at the targeted school as well as four of the fourth grade teachers at the school. The survey was given in order to determine whether or not teachers felt that students are interested in writing. The survey was done informally and with the whole group present. The researcher recorded oral responses from the teachers. The teachers represented the majority of teachers from the research site that work with students within a similar grade and age level. Results of the survey of teachers are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Responses of Teacher Survey to Determine Student Interest in Writing

Teacher Questions	<u>Teacher Responses</u>		<u>Percentages</u>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Do you like to teach writing?	4	4	50	50
Do you think students like to write?	1	7	13	87
Are your students motivated to write?	1	7	13	87
Would you like to increase your students' motivation to write?	8	0	100	0
Is writing hard to teach?	8	0	100	0
Do you feel pressured to increase writing test scores?	7	1	87	13
Is it important for your students to become good writers?	8	0	100	0
Do you like to write?	3	5	38	62
Do you think parents are concerned with their child's writing?	6	2	75	25
Would you like to know how to increase students' interest in writing?	8	0	100	0

The teacher questionnaire overwhelmingly confirms that students lack motivation and interest in writing. Eighty-seven percent of the teachers surveyed felt that their students lack motivation to write. Coinciding with this number, 87% of teachers also felt that their students do not like to write. All of teachers agreed that writing is hard to teach, but it is important for students to become good writers. In addition, 100% of the teachers would like to increase students' motivation to write. Finally, 100% of the teachers would like to know how to increase students' interest in writing.

The results of the questionnaires and survey support the national findings detailed in Chapter One. It is evident that at the research site, parents and teachers would agree with the researcher that students are not interested in writing. In spite of this, parents, teachers, and even students would like to become better writers. The task at hand, now, is what is causing students lack of interest in writing and how should the problem be solved. Probable causes and possible solutions, as well as the solution chosen by the researcher, are described in the following section of this chapter as well as in Chapter 3.

Probable Causes

Four probable causes for the determined academic problem can be identified in the literature. Each one of the probable causes is present at the research site. Each identified probable cause also contributes to the fifth grade students' disinterest in writing.

The first probable cause stems from the actual writing activities that are typically assigned to students. Writing activities lack intrinsic motivation for students. In general, many assigned writing activities are far from motivating or interesting to students in this age group. Students, and often teachers, do not understand why they are doing the assignment in the first place. Students are extrinsically motivated to do the assignments simply because they want to

please their teachers. What is missing is the intrinsic motivation for doing the assignment. (Metsala, 1996) While conducting her own research, Cleary (1996) found one student who lacked any intrinsic motivation for writing. According to that student:

When I do a paper for a specific teacher, I always try to figure out what they want. That seemed like the most trouble throughout school, living up to what they expect out of your writing and stuff. And I think that's what made writing feel more like work than pleasure. Each year the work would get harder and harder, and now in the 11th grade, it's more and more. I don't get excited about it. I do it because I know it has to be done. (p. 51)

The typical writing activities lack variety, relevance, or a purpose to bring forth intrinsic motivation for the students. Oftentimes, a teacher does not provide any variety in writing assignments throughout the year. The same type of activity featuring the same style of writing is presented over and over again. In addition, assigned writing is often completely irrelevant to the lives of the students. Not only do the students not care about the designated topic, they are unable to connect it to any aspect of their lives. "In school we have been bribed, cajoled, and sometimes threatened into writing about contrived topics that have no personal relevance and no real audience" (Marchisan & Alber, 2001, p. 154). When a student asks, "Why are we doing this?," it is obvious that they do not see a purpose for the writing activity. How can a student develop an intrinsic motivation for their writing if they cannot identify a purpose?

The second probable cause arises from the complexity of the writing process and the intricate rules relating to grammar and mechanics that are entwined with writing. Writing is a very complex form of communication that requires the application of several differing skills and abilities by the writer. Steven Graham (1997) suggested:

Skilled writers indicate they use various strategies to help them manage their writing behavior, the composing task, and their writing environment. These typically include self-strategies such as planning, revising, organizing, seeking information, monitoring, evaluating, environmental structuring, and so forth.

(p. 414)

With so many different tasks taking part in each writing experience, it is no wonder many students lose interest or motivation with their writing. Each of these tasks is a separate skill that needs to be taught to and then practiced by students before they can become comfortable incorporating the skill into their writing process.

In addition to the complexity of writing as a whole, specific grammar rules also play a part in deterring students from writing. The vast number of rules involving grammar and mechanics can be extremely intimidating to young writers. Also, many writers experience frustration with writing when they are still developing their understanding of the rules of grammar and mechanics. Teachers can even be guilty of heightening young writers' frustrations.

According to teacher Martinsen (2000):

Merely red-marking every error and covering the text with monotonous corrections and scoldings, as though one mistake were the same as another, represents the kind of careless, indifferent teacher response that causes students to give up, or to protect themselves from criticism by regressing to a simpler, more childish writing style. (p. 122)

A third probable cause for the lack of student interest in writing is the increased pressure placed on teachers to improve writing scores on standardized tests. The Illinois State Achievement Tests are used to measure student achievement in reading, writing, math, social

studies, and science. Writing, specifically, is tested in third, fifth, and eighth grade. These tests scores are used not only to evaluate the performance of students, but also that of teachers, administrators, schools, superintendents, and school districts as a whole. Test scores are published in newspapers, announced on television, and available on the Internet. These test scores are often the only data used to determine the quality of individual teachers and schools. It is no surprise, consequently, that teachers are continuously pressured to raise the writing scores of their students. If teachers are intensely pressured to raise writing test scores, they, in turn, are likely to place similar pressure on their students through increased number of writing activities as well as increased importance placed on writing abilities. "A survey of schools participating in the 1992 National Association of Educational Progress writing assessment found that priority was given to writing instruction in three fourths of the fourth-grade classrooms and two thirds of the eighth-grade classrooms" (Kear & Coffman, 2000, p. 10).

Feeling pressured to perform can often have negative effects on students and their writing. Assessing student writing according to a state rubric is resulting in student produced writing that is mechanical and lacks creativity. This type of writing tends to fit a format and lacks student voice. As said by Mabry (1999):

Research in Illinois has documented that direct writing assessment scored with a rubric yielded formulaic writing by students and simplification and homogenization of the writing process. The Illinois writing rubric indicated that a student should be credited for providing several points of support for his or her thesis. But examination of benchmark essays revealed that assessors were ignoring whether the points offered by a student actually supported the thesis and whether the student's paper exhibited coherence overall. Compliance with the rubric tended to yield higher scores but produced "vacuous" writing.

Performance was rewarded on the stated criteria only, and those criteria were insufficient to ensure good writing. (p. 676)

The last notable probable cause contributing to the lack of student interest in writing is a significant decrease in student motivation and interest across all academic areas. Several theories for the evident decrease in interest and motivation among students have emerged throughout recent research. One popular theory focuses on the idea that students come to school neither interested nor committed to learning. A cause of this is said to be familial and cultural attitudes toward education and academic achievement. Researcher Steinberg has written extensively on this topic. His findings:

Provide a damning indictment of contemporary American attitudes to education.

Steinberg's findings demonstrate large-scale parental disengagement from schooling whereby acceptance of poor grades is widespread, a peer culture that is often scornful of academic excellence, and student lifestyles in which a high proportion of time outside of school is spent socializing, engaged in leisure pursuits and/or part-time employment (Elliot and Hufton, 1999, p.77).

The multitude of entertainment options available to students also may play a part in the general lack of interest in academic subjects. Students have become accustomed to being entertained rather than educated both in and out of school. With television, video games, computer programs, and the Internet, children are finding many ways to entertain themselves.

To summarize, four probable causes for a lack of student interest in writing have been identified. These reasons are:

1. lack of intrinsic motivation for writing activities
2. complexity of the writing process and intricate grammar rules

3. increased pressure on teachers to raise writing scores
4. overall decrease of student motivation in all academic areas

Students have shown a decreased interest in writing due in part to the above-mentioned reasons. The solution to this problem is to allow students the opportunity to try new and different writing activities that will provide them with their own intrinsic motivation to write. Several possible suggestions to stimulate student writers are detailed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Chapter Two defines four probable causes for students' lack of interest in writing. In this chapter, several solution strategies, which originate from experts in education as well as the researcher, will be presented. Following, the researcher will describe the chosen solution strategy by describing the project objectives, processes, and project action plan.

The first reason students are disinterested in writing, as defined in Chapter Two, is the nature of the writing activities that are typically assigned in the classroom and how these writing activities fail to motivate students. Most often, students either do not understand why they are completing writing assignments or they fail to take ownership of the assignments. The challenge for teachers is to provide students with the opportunity to make choices and connect writing assignments to their own life and experiences.

Journal writing is a way to connect students with their writing by allowing them to write about their own interests, personal feelings, and experiences. Incorporating journal writing into the classroom provides students with a nonthreatening environment to express their thoughts. Journal writing also gives students a place to practice writing without pressure. Other benefits to the incorporation of journal writing include promoting fluency in reading and writing,

opportunity for student reflection, encouragement of risk taking, and promoting thinking and written language (Giorno, 1997).

To expand on the implementation of journal writing in the classroom, there are several variations of journal writing that can be incorporated. The writing department at Colorado State University (2002) detailed several different types of journaling that can be done in the classroom. For example, a dialogue journal between teacher and student allows both parties to dialogue about classroom topics or events in the students' lives. Reading response journals give students the opportunity to freely respond to reading selections by writing about given questions or simply expressing their thoughts and feelings about a piece that they have read. In order to spread journal writing throughout the curriculum, leaning logs can be used to allow students to write about what they are learning in any subject area.

Karen Bromley, as a way to provide intrinsic motivation for students to write, presents a final type of journal writing, interest journals. According to Bromley (1999):

Interest journals are a kind of journal in which students write entries about topics of interest and read entries written by their peers about these topics. Students can voice opinions, clarify their thinking, ask questions, build on one another's ideas, and debate issues. Interest journals offer students the opportunities to write persuasively as they try to change one another's minds and influence one another's actions. (p. 111)

Journal writing can be done at any grade level and in any subject area to incorporate writing and reflecting throughout the school curriculum. Even in classes such as physical education, art, music, or even math, a writing journal can be beneficial. Burns and Sibley (2001) argue:

A math journal is one of the best ways to introduce writing into your math class. It helps students stretch their thinking and make sense of problems that can sometimes leave them confused or frustrated. When children write in journals, they examine, express, and keep track of their reasoning, which is especially useful when ideas are too complex to keep in their heads. (p. 18)

The complex and intricate rules of writing grammar and mechanics provide the second probable cause for students' lack of interest in writing. The question that arises is how do you teach students grammar, mechanics, and how to incorporate it into their own writing without turning them away from writing completely? The challenge is to find a way to motivate young writers. According to Conner (2000), allowing students to publish their work is one answer. By giving the students the opportunity to publish their writing, they become engaged in the writing and the prospect of their writing being read by a real audience. Students are able to write knowing that their teacher will not be the only one reading their writing. When students know that they will be publishing their work, they show an increased interest in revising and editing as well as adhering to grammar rules.

A twist on publishing student writing is to assign writing tasks that are purposeful. Students will be motivated to write and apply grammar rules and mechanics if they know they are writing for a purpose and for a real audience. According to Graham and Harris (1997):

For instance, a third/fourth-grade class we observed recently assumed the task of cleaning a local stream. Part of this effort involved writing letters to the city council, mayor, and other influential townspersons. The class also wrote a grant to the city government to obtain funds to clean the stream. The students were committed to this project, and it showed in the amount of effort they devoted to it. They were self-directed and doing the

work with only minimal teacher guidance. (p. 109)

By providing students with the opportunity to write with a purpose, they will not only be more motivated to write, they will also want to make sure their writing is accurate and edited.

Learning how to edit grammar and mechanics will not seem to be as much of a chore, but rather an important part of the writing process for students. When reflecting on his own writing experiences, Barnitz (1998) offers:

I learned much more about using language and developed my own intuitions about grammar within authentic communicative contexts. In high school, for example, I acquired much sentence structure awareness while writing and editing scripts for our school's closed-circuit TV station as a writer/producer and while making news stories fit the page constraints of our weekly school newspaper as layout-production editor. (p. 608)

Within the process of students creating writing for a specific purpose or publication, a teacher can bring in grammar and mechanics gradually and in small doses by including a series of mini-lessons. Instead of overwhelming students with long and intricate lessons on grammar, short lessons that are geared to the students needs will introduce them to the skills they need and allow them to immediately apply these skills to their writing. “For example, the teacher may require students to edit their work for capitalization or punctuation errors only. Once students become proficient with a few mechanical editing skills, the teacher can gradually increase the requirements” (Marchisan & Alber, 2001, p. 157).

The constant pressure on teachers to increase standardized test scores in writing encompasses the third noted cause of student disinterest in writing. Increasingly, the pressure is being placed on teachers to improve scores and conform to state and district standards in all areas. In writing in particular, teachers are pressured to conform their writing instruction to set

formats and to include designated writing approaches such as the writing of persuasive, narrative, and expository essays. The emphasis, in meeting the standards, focuses on the written product and not on the process.

The challenge teachers face in this area is how to develop student writing to meet the needs of standards without alienating students and discouraging them from writing altogether. McBride (2000) proposed that teachers allow students to focus on their own individual strengths and weaknesses as writers instead of instructing all students to write using a standard format and rules. By allowing them to identify their weak areas, whether it be grammar, punctuation, or even varying length of sentences, students will be able to focus on developing their writing for their own good rather than that of the teacher or for the purpose of meeting a state goal that is futile to them. McBride (2000) describes her approach for each school year:

I came up with the idea of having students set goals for themselves as writers while I worked with them to track and follow their growth. This way, students would still be in charge of their own writing because they would be the ones (sometimes with a little guidance) to agree upon which areas of their writing they would make efforts to improve. And while they still had a choice, they would be, for the first time, paying closer attention to detail than they ever had before. (p. 49)

State goals and standards can still be met when each student determines what they need to work on in order to reach a specified level.

Use of a portfolio to measure assessment is another option to help reduce the pressure brought on by standardized testing. Gilman, Andrew, and Rafferty (1995) write:

Some say that overcoming the attendant problems of standardized tests can be accomplished by the use of portfolios as an alternative form of assessment. The portfolio

exists to demonstrate students' mastery of material, their ability to work meaningfully with the concepts and content presented in a given class, and their ability to incorporate that material with other knowledge. (p. 20)

The last probable cause for decreased student interest in writing, as determined by the researcher, is the lack of student motivation in all academic areas including writing. The issue of student motivation provides the subject for countless conversations, debates, and research articles throughout the field of education and beyond. It is not surprising, considering, that there is an abundant number of solutions strategies for lack of student motivation.

One strategy focuses on the behaviors of the teacher. An enthusiastic teacher is one suggested way to provide intrinsic motivation for students. "Teacher enthusiasm is a variable that has enjoyed a long history of association with effective teaching through its effects on such outcomes as achievement, test performance, recall, on-task behavior, student attitudes towards learning, and ratings of teacher effectiveness" (Patrick, Hisley, & Toni, 2000, p. 223). In relation to writing, it would be the responsibility of the teacher to model and enthusiastic attitude toward writing and the writing process. Teachers can do this by being writers themselves and by sharing their own writing with their students.

Another way for teachers to demonstrate their enthusiasm for writing in the classroom is to surround students with good literature. Fuhler and Farris (1999) claim, "Authors are superb teachers. Students might pattern a poem or a story after one written by a favorite author. They might learn from an author in books...it is the challenge and the responsibility of primary teachers to fill students with the ideas" (p. 16).

A second strategy to increase motivation is to provide a wide variety of assignments. Teachers can implement a multitude of writing activities. Word collections, palindromes, word

mobiles, riddles, idiom cartoons, time capsules, newsletters, and pen pal writing are just a few suggested strategies. In addition, poetry writing can be a positive experience for students.

“Teaching poetry writing is the best way I know to engage and celebrate all students--not just as writers, but as valued members of the classroom community” (Routman, 1999, p. 26).

In order to expand the possibilities for writing activities, it is also recommended that teachers integrate technology to motivate students throughout subject areas. Several different forms of technology integration can be implemented into the classroom in order to increase student motivation. “Laptop computers can provide students with the opportunity to learn anywhere and anytime...student motivation is extremely high. They exhibit excitement from the first day they spend using laptops” (Gottfried & McFeely, 1998, p. 8). In addition to the use of laptops, e-mail is also emerging as a new classroom tool. According to Wendy Leibowitz (1999):

Drafts of papers can be e-mailed to professors, and sensitive critiques can be delivered the same way, in a medium that is conducive to private ‘conversations.’ In computer-equipped classrooms, assignments can be easily distributed among students or posted in a collective electronic space. Students’ work can be published on the World-Wide Web, attracting feedback from readers elsewhere who may be neither peers nor professors--and exposing the students to a wider variety of opinions. (p. A67)

Finally, implementing technology can also come in the form of television and video in the classroom. “The use of television and video can be an instrumental resource for integrating imagery into literacy instruction at the listening level as well as motivation for script

development in the form of reading, writing, and dramatization” (Holbein & Bristor, 2001, p. 175).

Teachers can motivate students to write in other ways as well. Entering writing competitions is one way to excite students about writing and promote literacy. Karnes and Riley (1997) suggest:

Some competitions focus on creative writing, others on literature, and still others on the skills of readers and writers in a wide array of contexts. Increasing the availability of contests, quiz bowls, and the like gives balance to the sports and athletic events conducted in the schools. A stronger sense of pride for both the school and community also develops as students are recognized and rewarded for participation in such competitions. (p. 270)

Another way is for teachers to make a connection to the lives of their students in order to increase their motivation to write. In concurrence with this idea, Schaafsma (1999) states:

We teachers have to sometimes get involved in the physical, emotional, cultural, and social lives of our students. In other words, we have to teach for kids' lives. We have to be real with and for them, and that means making space for them to be real for themselves in inquiry-based learning environments where they can make a difference in their lives and in the world. (p. 31)

Project Objective and Processes

As a result of integrating technology into writing activities, during the period of September 2002 to November 2002, the fifth grade students from the targeted class will increase their interest in writing, as measured by teacher observation notes of student behaviors and

responses to writing activities (Appendix F), pre and post-intervention student surveys (Appendix D and E), and post-intervention student interviews (Appendix G).

In order to accomplish the project objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Students will publish a bi-weekly classroom newsletter using technology.
2. Student created children's stories will be published as well as transformed into interactive stories using technology.
3. Increased use of word-processing software will be implemented during writing activities as well as allowing student's to compose directly on the computer.
4. Students will perform a variety of daily writing activities including journaling and editing.

Project Action Plan

Time Period	Strategy	Participants	Reasoning
Week 1 September 16-20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administer Student Pre-Intervention Survey. 2. Administer Observation Record of student behaviors and reactions to writing activities. (on-going) 3. Facilitate various types of writing activities. (on-going) 4. Begin composition of original children's stories. 	All students in the targeted fifth grade class as well as the classroom teacher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine preliminary interest in writing. • To determine level of student interest in various types of writing assignments based on student behaviors.
Week 2-3 September 23-27 & September 30-October 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Generate student-created classroom newsletter. (on-going) 6. Continue work on original children's stories. 7. Facilitate writing activities that allow for use of a word processing program. 8. Administer Observation Record of student behaviors and reactions to writing activities. (on-going) 	All students in the targeted fifth grade class.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase use of writing activities including and excluding technology.
Week 4-5 October 7-11 & October 14-18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Complete publication of original children's stories. 10. Generate student-created classroom newsletter. (on-going) 11. Facilitate various types of writing activities. (on-going) 12. Administer Observation Record of student behaviors and reactions to writing activities. (on-going) 	All students in the targeted fifth grade class.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a complete writing project integrating technology.
Week 6 October 21- 25	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Begin creation of an interactive version of children's story using technology. 14. Continue writing activities, bi-weekly newsletter, observation record, and interactive children's stories as named above. 	All students in the targeted fifth grade class.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To expand use of technology for writing activities.
Week 7-8 October 28- November 1 and November 4- 8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Continue writing activities, bi-weekly newsletter, observation record, and interactive children's stories as named above. 	All students in the targeted fifth grade class.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to implement writing activities using technology.
Week 9 November 11-15	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Complete interactive children's stories. 17. Administer Student Post-Intervention Questionnaire. 18. Administer Student Post-Intervention Interviews. 	All students in the targeted fifth grade class as well as the classroom teacher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assess increased or decreased interest in writing.

Methods of Assessment

In order to determine the effects of the intervention, the following instruments and tools will be used as described:

1. Pre-Intervention Questionnaire (Appendix D): The pre-intervention questionnaire will be administered during the initial week of the intervention to all students in the targeted class. It will assist in identifying students' existing interest and attitudes towards writing. In addition, the questionnaire will aid in establishing the general level of computer knowledge and experience of the students. The researcher will analyze the results.
2. Student Observation Record (Appendix F) : The teacher will use the observation record to log reactions and behaviors of students during writing activities including those related to and non-related to technology.
3. Post-Intervention Questionnaire (Appendix E): The post-intervention questionnaire will be administered during the final week of the intervention to all students in the targeted class. It will assist in identifying any change in the students' interest in and attitudes towards writing activities. The researcher will analyze the results.
4. Post-Intervention Interviews (Appendix G): The researcher will administer the post-intervention interviews during the final week of the intervention to all of the students in the targeted fifth grade class. Interview responses will aid in determination of a change in the level of interest in writing activities due to the intervention. The researcher will analyze results.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of Intervention

The objective of this project was to increase student interest in writing amongst fifth grade students. The execution of this objective was by way of the integration of technology with the instruction of writing during the period of September 2002 through November 2002. Results were measured by pre and post intervention surveys (Appendix D and E), teacher observation notes of student behaviors and responses to writing activities (Appendix F), as well as post-intervention student interviews (Appendix G). All measurement instruments were created by the researcher to be used in the targeted fifth grade class.

All twenty-one of the students in the targeted class completed the pre and post intervention surveys. The pre-intervention survey (Appendix D) consisted of twenty-four total items to be completed by each student. The first five questions were general questions to determine the student's computer experience and at-home use. The following ten questions required the students to agree or disagree to statements about their interest in writing and writing activities. The final nine items took the form of a list of different writing activities. Students

were asked to check off any of the activities that they would enjoy doing. The post-intervention survey (Appendix E) contained nineteen total items. The first ten of these items were identical to those of the pre-intervention surveys. They required students to agree or disagree to several statements about writing. The final nine items, similar to the pre-intervention survey, consisted of a list of various writing activities. Once more, the students were required to check off those that they might enjoy doing.

Throughout the intervention period, teacher observation notes (Appendix F) were also used to record information during writing activities. Each time a writing activity was introduced to the targeted fifth grade class, the researcher recorded information including: date, activity at hand, number of uninterested responses in the activity, number of positive responses to the activity, time on task, and general comments concerning behavior during the activity. An uninterested response was defined as one that included negative comments, moans and groans, grumbling, as well as negative body language by students. Negative body language was interpreted by the researcher as slumping in the chair, daydreaming, crossed arms, as well as resting heads. A positive response was defined as one that included positive comments and positive body language. Positive body language was interpreted by the researcher as upright posture, raised heads, eye contact, and interested facial expressions. Throughout the intervention, the researcher recorded observed information about forty-eight total writing activities.

The final measurement instrument was implemented at the culmination of the intervention (Appendix G). The researcher interviewed seven students, or one-third of the research group. Each interview consisted of five main questions as well as appropriate follow-up

questions. Interviewees were questioned about their interest in writing activities as well as the type of writing activities they enjoyed most. The researcher recorded all responses.

Creative writing and various writing techniques were introduced to students in order for them to create their own original children's stories. Students would later publish their stories into a book form that would serve as the final product. The researcher employed lessons on mood, personification, dialogue, and sensory images in writing in order to assist students in developing their original stories into a finished piece of writing. When initial drafts were complete, the targeted fifth grade class was introduced to the processes of editing and revising. Students carried out these actions in order to produce a finalized children's story that was then illustrated, bound, published, and shared with the class.

The next step in this process was to publish the stories with the use of technology. To accomplish this, the researcher facilitated an instructional unit on the use of a multimedia program entitled HyperStudio 6.0®. At the conclusion of the unit, the students were able to produce their own interactive version of their children's stories. This publication format allowed the students to include animation, graphics, scrolling text, and sounds into their stories. Students then showcased their digital presentations for their classmates.

Throughout the course of the intervention, a student generated classroom newsletter was created in order to allow students the opportunity to compose original writing directly on the computer. Doing this would allow the students to use a word processing program as well as learn the basic fundamentals of the AppleWorks® program. The newsletter was truly a student production as two editors were chosen each week. Furthermore, the students were responsible for generating possible topics of interest and reporting any meaningful happenings from within the targeted classroom or school setting. After students composed their individual articles, the

editors transferred the pieces onto one document. Following the final revisions by the editors, each newsletter was published and distributed to students, parents, and staff. A newsletter was created every other Friday throughout the course of the two-month intervention.

Writing and journaling activities were implemented by the researcher throughout the research period. The forty-eight writing activities performed by students during this time were a mixture of traditional writing assignments as well as assignments that included the use of word processing software. One writing activity consisted of daily journals using a variety of writing prompts pertaining to curricular content. Other writing activities included persuasive essays, friendly letters, business letters, poetry, expository paragraphs, how-to paragraphs, character descriptions, and content related writing.

Throughout the intervention, little was changed from the original action plan. The only adjustment made involved the writing activities that were assigned for the students to complete at home. In order to monitor students' reactions when using technology to complete writing assignments, students were instructed not to complete any at-home writing activities using their personal computers.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to measure the effectiveness of the intervention, the researcher used a pre-intervention questionnaire as well as a post-intervention questionnaire (Appendix D and E). As mentioned in Chapter 3, the pre-intervention and post-intervention questionnaires were used to determine the students' interest in writing with or without the use of technology prior to the intervention as well as at the conclusion of the two-month intervention period. The questionnaires were given only to the 21 students in the targeted fifth grade class. Both questionnaires required students from the targeted class to agree or disagree to a series of ten

questions. Increases in the number of agree responses on the post-intervention questionnaire would indicate the desired effect of the intervention. A summary of the data collected from this series of questions is presented in Figures 1 and 2.

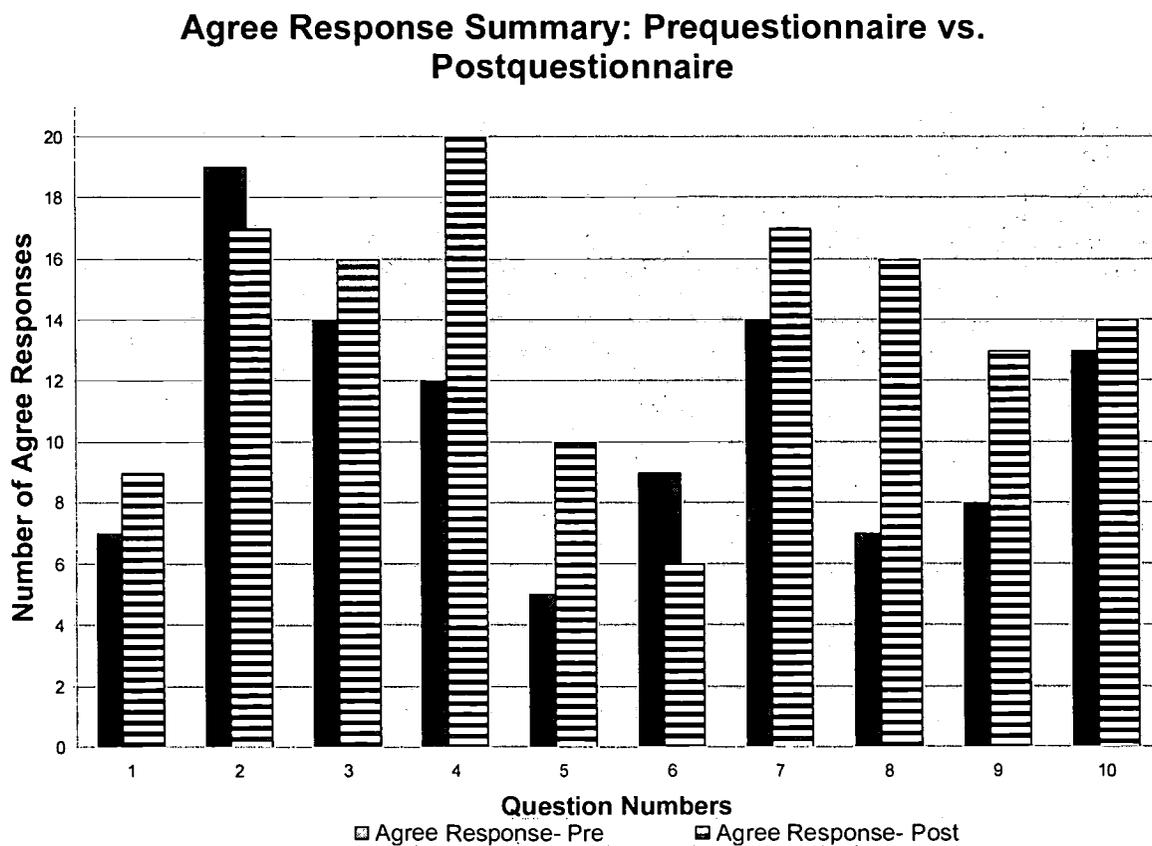


Figure 1. Agree Response Summary: Pre vs. Post Questionnaire

Agree: Percentage Increase Pre vs. Post Intervention

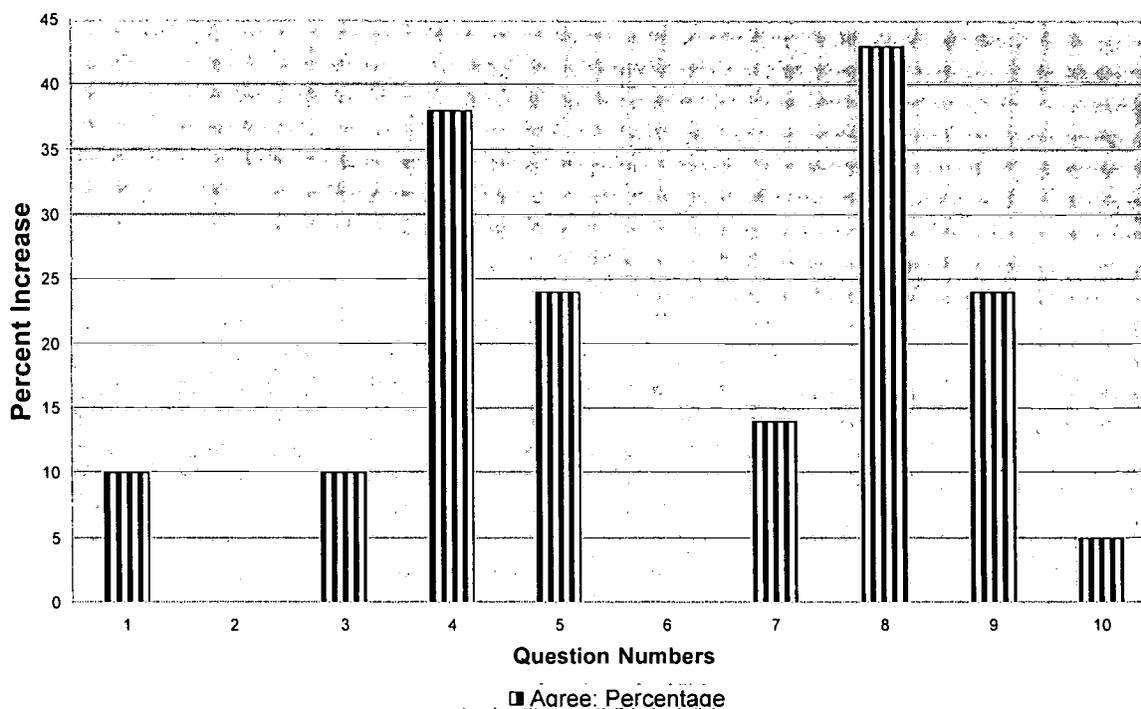


Figure 2. Agree Response Summary: Percentage Increase at Post Questionnaire

Figure one details the number of agree responses from the pre-intervention questionnaire in comparison with the agree responses for the post questionnaire. An evident increase in agree responses can be noted for the following 8 questions: #1, #3, #4, #5, #7, #8, #9, and #10. Increases in the number of agree responses for these questions indicate the success of the intervention. Figure two illustrates the percentage of the 21 students in the class that changed their response to agreement from the pre-intervention questionnaire to the post-intervention questionnaire for the noted eight questions. All of the questions identified in Figure 2 had a measurable increase in the percentage of agree responses. These percentages are evidence of the success of the intervention.

In statement #1 “I like to do writing activities in school” (Figure 1), an increase in agree responses by two students from the pre-intervention questionnaire to the post-intervention

questionnaire is shown. Similarly in statement #10 “I would like to become a better writer” (Figure 1), one additional student agreed to the statement after the intervention occurred. While these numbers are not drastic, they do show an increase in student interest in writing, which was the initial goal of the intervention.

Statements #3 and #4 are related in that they demonstrate a preference for writing activities using the computer in some way. In statement #3 “I would rather do a writing activity using the computer rather than pen and paper” (Figure 1), there was an increase of two students indicating an agree response at the end of the intervention. For statement #4 “I would rather send an email than send an actual letter” (Figure 1), there was an increase of eight agree responses. These statements clearly demonstrate an increase in student’s interest in using the available technology when it comes to their writing assignments.

Several statements on the survey are interrelated. An increase in agree responses on these statements exhibits a definite increase in the amount of pride and interest students have in developing their own writing. The first of these statements is #5, “I enjoy sharing my writing with others” (Figure 1), which had five additional agree responses at the time of the post-intervention questionnaire. A second statement is #7 “I usually finish my writing assignments” (Figure 1), which had three additional agree responses. Both of these statements show that students have increased their pride and ownership of their writing. Students who enjoy sharing their writing demonstrate that they are proud of what they have written. In comparison, by completing writing assignments that they start, students are also showing that they are proud of their work. Additionally, there was an increase in agree responses for statement #9 “I am a good writer” (Figure 1) as well as statement #10 “I would like to become a better writer (Figure 1). Statement #9 showed five additional agree responses while statement #10 revealed a one

additional agree response. Increases in the amount of agree responses for both of these statements illustrate an escalation in student confidence in writing and the desire to advance their abilities.

The highest increase was found in statement #8 “I like to read the writing of my classmates” (Figure 1), which showed an increase of nine agree responses. While the goal of the intervention was not necessarily to increase student interest in the writing of their peers, the researcher found this to be an additional benefit of the intervention.

A student observation record (Appendix F) was also used by the researcher to document the negative and positive responses during writing activities as well as the time on task during each writing assignment during the intervention period. Responses were noted for writing activities using technology as well as those that did not use technology. The purpose of recording observations was to be able to look back and determine which type of writing assignments received positive feedback from the students as well as keeping them on task for the duration of the assignment.

Positive Student Responses During Writing Activities

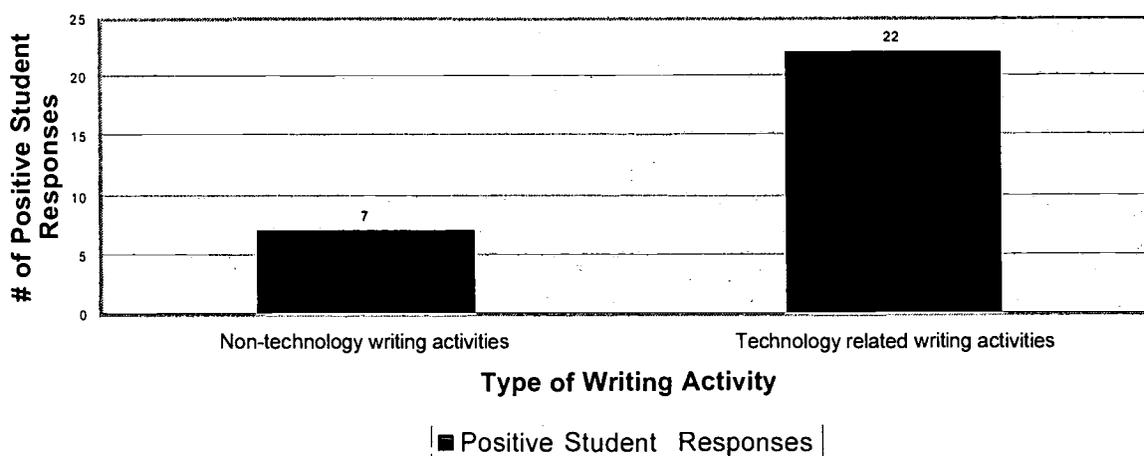


Figure 3. Positive Student Reactions to Writing Activities

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As seen in Figure 3, it was noted that while doing writing assignments using technology there were 22 instances of a positive reaction by the class. In comparison to an equal number of non-technology writing activities, these writing activities produced only 7 instances of a general positive reaction by the class. The researcher interpreted these results as a definite indication that the students preferred the technology related writing activities. Furthermore, the amount of time on task during writing activities involving technology was considerably higher than the amount of time on task with those writing activities not using technology. When using technology, students stayed on task practically 100% of the time. When a writing activity did not involve technology, student time on task varied from activity to activity, but rarely reached 100%. While behavior improvement during writing was not a primary goal of the intervention, it seems that when technology was introduced during a writing activity, students' remained on task and had more positive comments.

Finally, post-intervention student interviews (Appendix G) were given to a randomly selected group of 7 students that represented one third of the targeted fifth grade class. Each interview consisted of five questions as well as appropriate follow-up questions. Of the seven students interviewed, five students reported that they have enjoyed the writing activities that were part of the intervention. In addition, all seven of the interviewees agreed that they prefer doing activities using the computer. Six of those students desired to continue to complete writing activities that incorporated technology in some aspect. Four students responded that their favorite writing activity of the year thus far was the classroom newsletter that incorporated AppleWorks. Three students preferred the HyperStudio stacks that were created in coalition with student created children's stories. It is noteworthy that all students chose a technology related writing assignment as their favorite writing activity thus far. Moreover, when asked why

they chose the selected activity, six of the seven interviewed students mentioned their appeal in the technology involved in the assignment. Students who received the intervention were found to select writing assignments involving technology and desire to continue with similar assignments.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Due to the lack of interest and motivation demonstrated by students in the area of writing, an intervention strategy was developed. The goal of the study intervention was to increase student interest in writing through the integration of technology. In order to do this, a variety of technology related writing activities were incorporated into the targeted fifth grade class. These writing activities included a classroom newsletter, HyperStudio stacks, as well as a variety of writing assignments incorporating various types of technology. From the results of the intervention, it is evident that technology when integrated with writing has a definite impact on increasing student interest in writing. These were the results the researcher had predicted prior to the intervention.

During the intervention, students showed enthusiasm when technology components were introduced. Also, there was a dramatic increase in the quality of the writing that was created in connection with a technology component. This only shows that the students invested more of their efforts and time into a writing assignment that interested them. The same assignments were also those that the students showed a desire to share with classmates, parents, and other teachers. For example, when each newsletter was created, students were anxious to take a copy to favorite teachers and bring it home for their families to read. Along the same lines, when the students were working on their HyperStudio stacks, they were constantly calling over other students to see their work and how well this program complimented their writing.

Other effects of the intervention were also noted. While some of these effects were somewhat of a surprise, several are likely to occur as student interest in writing increases. Therefore, the evidence of several of these affects also show proof as to the increase in student interest in writing due to the study integration. The first of these effects was that the students became more interested in sharing their writing with others. They also gained confidence in their writing and their writing abilities. At the end of the intervention, the researcher found that students were much more open to having their writing edited by a peer as well as being more interested in the suggestions for improvement. These effects are noteworthy because they are key components in creating good writers.

The researcher recommends the intervention strategy to teachers who are interested in increasing their students' interest in writing as well as increasing their desire to improve their writing. Incorporating technology is likely to increase interest in writing for students in similar classroom situations as that of the researcher. One possible drawback to the intervention would be the lack of available computer technology. If not enough technology is accessible, the students may become frustrated and uninterested in completing the writing assignments. With the availability of necessary technology, however, students will be interested in the writing assignments. To further the intervention, additional technology related assignments could be introduced depending on the interests of the students.

The researcher recommends the intervention for teachers of any grade and age level as long as they desire to improve interest in writing. Most students, if not all, enjoy using computers in and out of school. If teachers have access to technology and software, they may choose to integrate the intervention into their classroom writing instruction.

One way that the intervention could be more successful in the classroom is if the students had access to their own laptop computers so that they could have the choice of whether or not to use the technology on various writing assignments. Students could also be allowed to choose how they would like to use technology to present their writing. With the addition of choice into the intervention, students may develop a further interest in writing assignments.

In conclusion, the researcher has determined that the intervention was a success in more ways than one. Not only did the researcher achieve the desired outcome of increasing student interest in writing, the researcher also noticed an increase in students' desire to improve writing and share it with others. These improvements have made a dramatic and positive difference in the targeted fifth grade class. The researcher plans to continue to use the intervention strategies and adapt it to meet the needs of future students.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Student Questionnaire

Check Yes or No.	Yes	No
Do you like to write?		
Do you like writing in school?		
Do you like doing assigned writing activities?		
Is writing your favorite subject?		
Is writing your least favorite subject?		
Are you a good writer?		
Do you like to share your writing?		
Do you always understand writing assignments?		
Do you think writing is challenging?		
Are you motivated to be a good writer?		
Do you struggle to come up with ideas to write about?		
Do you do any writing outside of school?		
Do you want to be a professional writer?		
Would you like to do more writing in school?		

APPENDIX B
Parent Questionnaire

Check Yes or No.	YES	NO
Do you like to write?		
Did you like to write in school?		
Does your child like to write?		
Do you help your child with writing assignments?		
Do you like to read your child's writing?		
Are you a good writer?		
Is your child a good writer?		
Would you like your child to become a better writer?		
Does your child struggle with writing?		
Is your child motivated to be a good writer?		
Does your child struggle to come up with writing ideas?		
Does your child do any writing on his/her own?		
Do you think it is important for your child to be a good writer?		
Would you like more emphasis on writing at your child's school?		

APPENDIX C
Teacher Questionnaire

Check Yes or No.

YES

NO

Do you like to teach writing?

Do you think students like to write?

Are your students motivated to write?

Would you like to increase your students' motivation to write?

Is writing hard to teach?

Do you feel pressured to increase writing test scores?

Is it important for your students to become good writers?

Do you like to write?

Do you think parents are concerned with their child's writing?

APPENDIX D

Fifth Grade Student Pre-Intervention Questionnaire

- Do you have a computer at home? Yes No
 If yes, what do you most often use the computer for? _____
- Do you ever use the Internet at home? Yes No
 If yes, what do you most often do on the Internet? _____
- Do you ever send email from home? Yes No
 Do you ever write in a journal or diary at home? Yes No
 Do you ever do any other type of writing at home? Yes No
 If yes, what type of writing do you do? _____

Circle whether you agree or disagree to the following statements. If you aren't sure, circle don't know.

1. I like to do writing activities in school.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
2. I like to use the computer in school.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
3. I would rather do a writing activity using the computer rather than pen and paper.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
4. I would rather send an email than send an actual letter.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
5. I enjoy sharing my writing with others.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
6. I like to be given a topic to write about.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
7. I usually finish my writing assignments.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
8. I like to read the writing of my classmates.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
9. I am a good writer.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
10. I would like to become a better writer.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree

Check off any of the following writing activities you might enjoy doing.

- Write an article for a classroom newsletter.
 Publish your own children's book.
 Use Hyper Studio to create a computerized children's story.
 Send a letter to the president.
 Email a student at another school.
 Create a report about your favorite musician.
 Make an informational web page about nutrition.
 Write out step-by-step directions for making a cake.
 Use the computer to create a travel brochure about your favorite city.

APPENDIX E
**Fifth Grade Student Post-Intervention
 Questionnaire**

1. I like to do writing activities in school.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
2. I like to use the computer in school.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
3. I would rather do a writing activity using the computer rather than pen and paper.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
4. I would rather send an email than send an actual letter.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
5. I enjoy sharing my writing with others.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
6. I like to be given a topic to write about.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
7. I usually finish my writing assignments.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
8. I like to read the writing of my classmates.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
9. I am a good writer.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
10. I would like to become a better writer.	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree

Circle whether you agree or disagree to the following statements. If you aren't sure, circle don't know.

Check off any of the following writing activities you might enjoy doing.

- Write an article for a classroom newsletter.
- Publish your own children's book.
- Use Hyper Studio to create a computerized children's story.
- Send a letter to the president.
- Email a student at another school.
- Create a report about your favorite musician.
- Make an informational web page about nutrition.
- Write out step-by-step directions for making a cake.
- Use the computer to create a travel brochure about your favorite city.

APPENDIX F
**Observations of Student Behaviors During
 Writing Activities**

Date	Writing Activity	# of Negative Responses to Activity	# of Positive Responses to Activity	Time on Task During Activity	General Comments About Behavior During Activity

*Negative responses include: negative comments, moans and groans, grumbling, negative body language, etc.

*Positive responses include: positive comments, positive body language, interested expressions.

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APPENDIX G
Student Interview Questions

1. How do you feel about doing writing activities in school?

Follow-up:

2. Do you prefer the paper and pencil activities or the activities using the computer? Explain.

Follow-up:

3. In the future, would you like to continue to do writing activities using technology in some way? Why or why not?

Follow-up:

4. Have you enjoyed your writing assignments more this year than in the past? Why or why not?

Follow-up:

5. What was your favorite writing activity so far? Why?

Follow-up:

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